

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. XII.

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No. 8

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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THE NEW YEAR.

Hail to the glad New Year!
Welcome its foot-fall near,
Sandalled with love.
Softly, as falls the snow,
Fleetly, as angels go,
It comes with hope aglow,
Born from above.

Fresh is the gift it brings,
Sweet is the song it sings,
Our hearts to cheer.
Upward it points the way,
Onward to brighter day,
Wiping the tears that stay,
Shaming our fear.

God of the Old and New!
Give us the vision true,
The heart of fire;
Strong hands to work for God,
Swift feet with mercy shod,
Treading the path *He* trod,
Souls to inspire.

—*W. P. Tilden, in Christian Register.*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF YEARS INTO LIFE.

A Discourse delivered to the Church of the Disciples, Boston, Jan. 1, 1888, by James Freeman Clarke.

Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.—2 COR. iv. 16.

The problem of human existence may be stated thus, "How can we change Time into Life?" We know very well that time can be changed into force by mechanical contrivances. All the mechanical powers—the lever, the pulley, the inclined plane, the wheel, the wedge—are contrivances of this sort. The object of each is to change time into force, so as to enable a man to do by a succession of efforts what he could not do by a single effort. The force thus obtained by an expenditure of time can be stored away and kept for use. Thus, when you wind up your watch, you store away in the main-spring an amount of force which will cause the watch to go for twenty-four hours.

Time can thus be changed into physical force, and that force can be stored away, to be used as it is wanted. Can time be changed into mental and moral force in a similar way? No doubt that this can also be done, and is continually done. It takes place without any effort, and hardly any consciousness, in children while they are growing up, and until, as we say, they "come of age." Each day they spend gives them some additional knowledge and practical experience. As the sun each day develops the life of plants, and causes them to grow, each new day brings influences to develop the soul of children and youth. Their powers unfold, their faculties are trained, they are able to use them better. Thus time is turned into life.

There have been many treatises written on the advantages of growing old, and the blessings which God gives to age. But I do not remember having seen mentioned one

which, to me, seems very great and full of satisfaction. It is this: that as life goes on it becomes so much more rich in friendships and half-friendships, in persons whom we know well or know a little. When we are young, we can go from Boston to Florida, and not meet a soul we know. This makes travelling lonely. When we are older, we cannot go anywhere without encountering some one we have seen or known in some part of our life, and whom we are glad to see again. We talk of the past days when we were together, or compare notes as to what we think and do now. Thus the world seems more rich and full. Thus, simply by continuing to live, one finds himself in relations with friends or organizations in every place. When I look at the map and see the States of Ohio, of Michigan, of Pennsylvania, of Kentucky, of Missouri, I do not see merely the names of towns and rivers, but there rises in my mind the recollection of old friends, of familiar homes, of hospitable dwellings which received me years ago, of good men and women fighting a good fight still, all at work to make the world better. Thus the empty map is filled with pictures of kindly faces, generous and noble human beings, large activities of life and thought.

As we advance in life, the memory—that receptacle of inexhaustible capacity—becomes more full of facts and thoughts. These are ready to appear when called upon. We talk of the garrulity of age. An old man often talks a great deal, but it is because he has so much to say. One thing suggests another: every event is associated with numerous similar events in his experience. A moment ago his mind was empty: now one word arouses a multitude of latent memories,—they spring up as, in “*The Lady of the Lake*,” the clansmen sprang up at the whistle of Roderick Dhu,—

“That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men.”

A young man, preparing to write a speech, often finds his mind as blank as the paper before him. He cannot think of anything to say. But, when years have come and gone, thoughts and illustrations come trooping in very rapidly. This is a common experience. Past observation and past study fill the intellect with material for future work. Many young men make the mistake in youth of asking too curiously the use of this or that study. They neglect many opportunities of knowledge because they cannot see

the use of it. I would say to young persons that all knowledge is likely to become of use, sooner or later, and often in the most unforeseen ways. Some kinds of information, no doubt, are more useful than others. But everything we see and notice, so as to fix it in our memory, feeds the mind and may come up hereafter to help us in some emergency. Time is changed into life whenever we learn anything. But to learn really we must make our study radical and thorough, not superficial.

To learn to attend, to observe, to notice what is around us, changes time into life. Attention to what is immediately before the mind, to the exclusion of all else, is a great art. Many of us only pay a half-attention to what we see and hear. Then we do not remember it. Travelling in new countries is useful as calling out the faculty of observation. The traveller feels it his business to notice everything, and often while abroad is interested in what he has seen at home, but not noticed.

Another form of life is energy in action and ability to accomplish work. The progress of years often continues and increases this ability. Although middle life seems to be the best time for work, it is surprising to see how many old men have been distinguished as statesmen, soldiers, lawyers, merchants, physicians, writers. To-day the destinies of Europe are in the hands of three or four old men. John Quincy Adams was sixty-four years old when he entered Congress, and the seventeen years of his life which followed were the most wonderful part of his career. Benjamin Franklin was seventy years old when he went as American ambassador to the court of France, and became the first diplomatist in Europe. He was eighty-two when he became a member of the convention which formed the American Constitution, and he did some of the best work of his life in that body. Such facts are curious, and show that while age takes away so much from the active power of man, by diminishing his nervous energy, it sometimes makes up for it by long-trained habits, practical skill, and tried judgment. A man ought to grow wise as he grows old, and what is wisdom but practical judgment, ripened by experience? In some rare instances, such, for example, as that of Dr. Franklin, this becomes a sort of intuition or divination, and realizes the truth of Milton's statement that

“Old experience may attain
To something of prophetic strain.”

But, though most of us are not meant to grow up into wise judges, great statesmen, or keen diplomats, we can use the faculties trained by many years of labor, each in his own department, and thus continue to do some good work to the last. So time is changed into life by accumulated force of practical wisdom.

God has blessings for all the decades of human life,—for youth, manhood, age. To a young person, an old one may seem a pitiable object; but, when age comes, it brings with it numberless blessings and compensations. The heats of youth have passed by,—its vague hopes, its inordinate ambitions, its wild efforts. "Youth," says Schiller, "launches from the shore with a fleet of a hundred vessels. Age arrives, rescued from shipwreck on a single boat." But age is calm, trusting, hopeful, satisfied. The peace of God enters the soul as we grow old. I remember going with John Andrew to pass the night in the house of Francis P. Blair. Blair had been one of the most virulent and best-hated politicians of the days of Gen. Jackson. His life had been full of storms, hot with bitter controversies. I found the old man and his wife seated by a wood fire, tranquil and peaceful, filled with good will to all mankind. Is not age a blessing when it tranquillizes thus the heats of manhood? The long day, full of work, draws to an end. The Lord gives to its sunset no gray hue, but a tender, rosy beauty, indicating a bright dawn to come.

As we live, if we have had any simple tastes, these continue to fill the soul with peaceful joy. He who has learned to love nature in his youth enjoys her beauty and blessing to the last hour of life. She never grows old. Her unwrinkled countenance is fresh as on creation's day. She is like Christ in this, that having loved her own, she loves them even to the end. Every spring which comes to us has a charm before unknown. It is a new miracle of God, a new coming down of divine life into the world. The long summer hours, the multitudinous foliage, the soft clouds drifting over the sky, the immeasurable smile of ocean, the "deep's untrampled floor," the mountain rising like a cloud of incense from the earth, the wild forest, the tender flowers,—the charm of these is never worn out, never tires. So, too, the love of music, of poetry, is ever fresh, ever joy-giving.

One is never too old to read, to learn. The wonderful discoveries of science; the explora-

tions which have taught us of the marvellous beauties and wonders of our own country,—Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona; the travels which give us pictures of China and Japan, the Himalaya Mountains, the monks of Mt. Athos, the heart of Africa,—how interesting to visit these scenes while sitting at the fireside and reading a good book of travels! How interesting to assist at the discovery of the sources of the Nile, to cross the continent with Stanley, to go to New Zealand or Australia without fatigue or exposure! How interesting to be with Dr. Schliemann when he discovered where Troy stood, and opened the treasury of Mycenæ. It is curious to think that we know more about Egypt than Herodotus, more about ancient Hellas than Cicero, more about early Rome than Livy, and more about the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies than the seven wise men of Greece. And now we find similar antiquities in our own country, buried cities in Yucatan and Arizona.

Years give us a growing enjoyment in knowledge. When we are young, we seek knowledge, perhaps sometimes with a little personal feeling,—a desire to excel in our attainments. When we are old, we enjoy knowledge for its own sake. It passes into our life: it becomes a part of the soul. We go back into history, and read the story of the ancient Brahmins: we read about Buddha and Confucius, about life in ancient Egypt, about the Christians in the Catacombs, and in all we find the same humanity which throbs around us to-day. I lately read some of the letters of the younger Pliny, a charming book which shows us that, amid all the luxury, all the cruel ambitions of imperial Rome there were multitudes of happy homes, wise and good fathers and mothers, warm friendships, pure women and honest men. Thus history becomes a part of our own life. Of Henry More it is said that he had such an immoderate thirst for knowledge that his tutor asked him why he studied so hard. He replied, "That I may know." "But why do you wish to know?" "I wish to know, that I may know." "For," adds More, "even then the knowledge of natural and divine things seemed to bring me the greatest imaginable joy." The desire to know the truth and to do good must both be disinterested in order to be satisfactory.

The years also teach to most well-intentioned persons a deeper religion, a truer faith. How many old men I have known who in early life were somewhat narrow and bigoted,

zealous for forms or ceremonies, who as they grow old go deeper down and pass from the religion of the letter to that of the spirit. I think the same change came over the Apostle Paul. In his earlier epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians he discusses doctrines with much energy. But in those which were written toward the end of his life, during his imprisonment at Cæsarea,—the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians,—these discussions cease, and they overflow from beginning to end with gratitude to God, love to Christ, peace, spiritual aspiration, tranquil submission, and inward joy.

I think that, if we have a sincere desire to know and to serve God, the years change our religion into life. We cease to harass ourselves or others much about mere questions of dogma or sect. A very few central truths satisfy us. Trust in God, love to man, are enough. Our prayers cease to be formal, and become a habit of the soul,—waiting on God, looking to him for strength, dwelling in his infinite peace. Our faith in Christ turns to love. What to us are questions about his nature, whether supernatural or not, about his transcendental or primæval being? We know that our joys and our sorrows touch his heart; that, when we wrong man, we wrong Christ, when we help man, we help Christ. We all, in our different phrases, still look to him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We learn to see in Jesus not Master and Lord only, but tender Brother and blessed Friend. We obey him best when we are true to what is right and good.

“Our Friend, our Brother, and our Lord,
What may thy service be?
Nor name, nor form, nor ritual word,
But simply following thee.”

So Christianity becomes a reality and a part of our life. It ceases to be profession, but is strength and peace. The outward part may perish, but the inward part is renewed day by day.

Thus the years, as they pass on are changed into life, partly by God's providence and without any effort of ours. It is done by a law of our nature. God has so made us that, while we grow old in one way, we grow young in another way; while we are becoming more weak in body, we grow more strong in spirit. That is the natural tendency of things if we do not oppose it by our own willfulness. If we accept patiently and trustingly what comes to us from God, there comes with it an inward strength and peace. What

we have to add on our part is trust, submission, fidelity. Let us be loyal to our work, whatever it is: whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with our might. Let us forget the things behind,—disappointment, sorrow, the unkindness of others, remorse over ourselves. Leave them behind, and reach out to things before,—to deeper knowledge, larger usefulness, purer love. And so, while the outward man perishes, the inward man will be renewed day by day.

One of the most convincing arguments for immortality is the undying appetite of the soul for knowledge, love, progress. As we approach the term of life, it never occurs to us that it is time to fold our arms, close our eyes, and bid farewell to nature, poetry, art, friendship, business. As long as our faculties permit, we take exactly the same interest in life, as if we were to live fifty years longer.

Therefore, we come at last to think nothing about dying, but more and more about living. We do not desire to die in order to go to God, for God is with us here on this side as much as on the other. He teaches us that he, the Infinite Presence, the boundless Tenderness, whose joy is to pour himself out in nature as a ceaseless Creator, to make his myriad creatures full of gladness here, is the same God who will be with us there. What matters it when we cross the line which divides this world from the next? It is only an imaginary line, like that which divides two States of our Union. We pass from Massachusetts into New Hampshire and do not know it; for there is the same scenery around, the same sky above, the same sort of people speaking the same language. So it will be, I think, when we pass into the other life; for there will be the same God above and the same soul within, the same beauty around in nature, work to do, objects of knowledge, loving hearts, benign friendships, and eternal progress. Therefore, we keep up our activities to the end; and, though the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.—*Ps. xxvii. 14.*

Another year with all its hopes and fears

Has sunk into the deep abyss of time;

And on the threshold of the new we stand,

Like travellers to a new and distant clime.

Hope, smiling, beckons, bidding us take courage;

Faith points to heaven, where God and angels dwell,

Assuring us that all our untried future

Is known to him who doeth all things well.

—Selected.

Truth cannot be plucked from the trees.
Truth hardly won, is the more precious for the winning. The world does grow so much better. Life itself has been full of richness.

All the best and strongest men who have ever lived have found hope from experience. No man can be a Christian and an American, and not be an optimist.

You must expect disappointments, but you must not be discouraged. Go forward without doubts or fears, perfectly sure that, if you do your duty, there will dawn upon you a hope more sober, but stronger. From the moment you see it you will never lose it, but it will go on with you forever. *New Year's Sermon, Jan. 3, 1886.*

Let men get deep into their own present, and they are masters of their own future.

God says, Live deeply, earnestly in the present, and the spirit of all the ages shall come and reveal itself to you.—*New Year's Sermon, Jan. 1, 1888.*

Every day add something to your life, and then be sure that in that addition you see something further on.—*New Year's Sermon, Jan. 5, 1890.*

Text, Gen. xxxii. 26.—"And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

How has it been in our personal lives? Have we taken the blessing that has come to us? Are we better men because of the year whose career has been such a struggle for a great many, ay, for all of us?

The year must go, and it may go when it has given us its blessing. I desire to live; but, the moment that this mortal life has given me all it has to give, why should I want to cling to it any longer? To know when to let our year go, that is the way in which the real man deals with life. So let us go forward in the larger life, sure that the larger life is natural, because of that which the lesser life has had the power to give us.—*New Year's Sermon, Jan. 4, 1891.*

Those who come of New England stock should possess the Old New England char-

acter,—those fundamental virtues, integrity, earnestness, self-respect.

We must ever feel that God made us as one part of his great family for a good purpose.—*Thanksgiving Dinner, Nov. 26, 1891.*

Character is the grandest thing in life. Character is the one important factor in human life. There are men who care not whether they are rich or poor, famous or despised, but possess characters that stand for the good. Character will be a power at the judgment-seat of God.

It is not this or that particular line of intellectual belief that is the great thing in this life, but it is character, character.

When I stand by the body of a man who has died, the question is not how much money has he left, but what character has he left. Character, and character only, is the thing that is eternally powerful in this world. Character is the divinest thing on earth.—*New Year's Sermon, Jan. 1, 1893.*

—*Sermons of Phillips Brooks.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received that book." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the offer to the club. To send the book involves packing it twice and paying postage twice, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" Unless otherwise stated, all books offered in this department are given, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols saying that you have sent it. When you receive more

requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

"The Ruling Passion," Henry Van Dyke; "Pottery Decoration"; "A Calendar of Thought," Lucy Larcom; "The Refugees," A. Conan Doyle; "Little Rivers," Henry Van Dyke; "Naomi," Mrs. Lee; "A Blockaded Family"; "The Minister's Charge," W. D. Howells; "The Portion of Labor," M. F. Wilkins; "Paul Kever," Jerome; "Briton and Boer"; "Children of Destiny," M. E. Seawell; "The Prince of India," Lew Wallace; "The Writings of Charles Sprague"; Sermons, Phillips Brooks; "My Threescore Years and Ten," Thomas Ball; "Some Other Folks"; "Not Angels Quite"; Histories, China, Spain, Egypt; "Romance of a Jesuit Mission"; "Dolly Madison," Maud W. Goodwin.

The following books are offered by the Second Church branch, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 4 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.

"Exercises in Geography," C. H. Leete; "First Steps in Arithmetic," Ella M. Pierce; "Lessons in Numbers," Part I., M. M. Peck; "Lessons in Elementary Grammar," Mirick; "Elements of Composition and Grammar"; "Practical Lessons in English," Mary F. Hyde; "Illustrated Primer," Sarah Fuller; "Longman's 'Ship' Literary Readers," Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; "Longman's Primary Readers," Grades 1, 2; "Child Life: A Primer"; "Aunt Hannah, John and Martha," Pansy; "The Moorland Princess," F. Marlitt.

REQUESTS.

[Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of

States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club Secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. *Dear Cheerful Letter*,—If I am not too late for the next issue of your paper, will you please allow me to thank the dear, kind friends who have responded to my appeal for reading matter, through the columns of the paper? I have written to each one personally who sent me their names and addresses, but I have received several magazines with no name on. I do sincerely thank every one who has sent me literature of any description. It has helped to beguile the weary time that hangs so heavily on a sick person's hands. Mrs. A. S. Woodhouse, 31 Winthrop Street, Staunton, Virginia.

2. Mrs. Ida Brown, Palmetto, Virginia, will be glad of any reading.

3. Mrs. L. B. Rice, Highlands, North Carolina, has been ill since spring, and asks for light reading.

4. Miss Mattie Sale is now teaching at Brier Creek, Wilkes County, North Carolina. She writes that the walls look very pretty with the pictures sent her, and that she will be grateful for any aid.

5. Mrs. Fannie Nolen, Shooting Creek, Virginia, a farmer's wife and an invalid, with two young children, will be glad of any reading.

6. Mrs. Thomas H. Drummond, Gidsville, Virginia, asks for "Driven back to Eden," "Little Lord Fauntleroy," and "Lady of Quality."

7. I want to thank all who so kindly sent me books and papers. There were a few that sent a postal or had an address on the wrapper which I wrote to immediately; but there was one friend who sent me three of *Welch's Journal*, which had no name or address of any kind, and I want to thank whoever it was, for they were fine. I have read them over and over. I enjoy *The Cheerful Letter*, and, although it is a small paper, it

is full of good things; and I pick it up quite often through the month and find a restful bit of reading. Mrs. Alice Walt, 240 Oliver Avenue, San Diego, California.

8. I want to thank the kind friends who sent me the Life of Queen Elizabeth and those beautiful views. I lost their addresses, so I could not thank them personally. I am teaching at the Baptist Orphanage, Salem, Virginia. I have fifty boys to teach and help manage, so you know I have all I can do. They are very fond of reading, and I would be pleased to receive any kind of reading matter suitable for boys. And, if any of the kind Cheerful Letter friends have any pictures or globes or maps that they do not need, we would like to have them. M. Ada Cannaday, Salem, Virginia.

9. I have been receiving *The Cheerful Letter* regularly for some time, which I have greatly appreciated, but have received no other literature except some sent me by my correspondent, Mrs. Kate H. Garland, of Concord, Mass. There is some literature that I especially desire to make a request for, as I have never made any before. I will gladly hand to others when I have finished. First, I would like Grimm's or Andersen's "Fairy Tales" and back numbers of the *St. Nicholas* and *Wide Awake* for a little girl eleven years old; second, some good books or journals on pharmacy for my husband; third, for myself any nice books or magazines. I especially ask for "Lorna Doone," "King Solomon's Mines," and "The Swiss Family Robinson." Mrs. Eugenia Palmer, La Rue, Henderson County, Texas.

10. With kindly thoughts and grateful thanks I come to-day to all the friends who have so generously sent reading and letters of cheer, since I joined your Cheerful Band a few months ago. I fail to find words in which to express how much cheer and comfort *The Cheerful Letter*, *Success*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Sabbath Reading*, and copies of several other publications have been. Living as we do in a very isolated, out-of-the-way place, they have indeed been blessed rays of sunshine in our lonely little home. I hope it is not asking too much when I request for myself in the coming year the *Delineator* and *Youth's Companion* for my five boys after some one has read them. If any one can send them, we will be very grateful. I shall be forty-five years old 2d of February, 1904,

and, as I never enjoyed the pleasure of a birthday party in my life, the little white-winged messengers will be gladly and thankfully received if any of the dear friends would like to send. Love and good wishes for every one. From your sister shut-in of the sunny South. (Mrs.) Lizzie Bunton, Mackiesville, Caldwell County, Texas.

11. Mrs. Harriet C. Tate, Shark, Arkansas, wishes to thank the friends that have remembered her in the past, and hopes for a continuance of their kindness. She is an invalid, now confined to her room.

12. Mrs. Hattie Scott, Danville, Arkansas, will be glad of reading for herself and pictures for her little girl. Mrs. Scott is a widow, working hard for the support of herself and child.

13. Mrs. Samuel H. Ward, Max, North Carolina, will be glad of magazines.

14. Mrs. A. Vernon, Spray, North Carolina, will be grateful for any reading for herself and husband.

15. Rev. F. W. Keene, North Berwick, Maine, would very much appreciate current numbers of *Harper's* or *Atlantic Monthly*.

16. Having several times received reading through *The Cheerful Letter*, though not for quite a while, I write to ask if there is any possibility of my obtaining current magazines or papers of any kind. I only have the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and would be glad of anything. I do not mind receiving numbers late, but would like so much to have reading that will give me general information and general knowledge of the world's progress. Mrs. Nathan P. Robertson, 214 North Park Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia.

17. C. B. Frazelle, Swansboro, North Carolina, would be pleased to have any of the following books for a Loan Library: "Red Rock," "Scottish Chiefs," "The Days of Bruce," "Wanted, a Matchmaker," "A Prisoner in Bluff," "A Lily of France," "The Scottish Knights."

18. A copy of *The Cheerful Letter* has fallen into my hands through the kindness of Mr. C. B. Frazelle of Swansboro. I see in that little paper that it is possible to receive

books through your book club I am principal of the Swansboro Institute, and have exhausted my means in putting up a building, and would be thankful indeed to receive a donation of books for the Swansboro Institute Library,—good, safe literature of all kinds. I am really not able to purchase books, and would appreciate a gift for this destitute section. B. H. Matthews, Swansboro, North Carolina.

19. I thank you very much for the paper sent me some days ago. It is indeed a Cheerful Letter to those who like myself see little of the bright side of life. I would like to become a member of your club, and would be glad to get papers or current magazines, as I am not able to buy. Mrs. A. J. Hoback, Floyd, Virginia.

20. I have been told of your paper reaching so many homes, I thought I would send my name and subscribe for it: thereby I might hear of my son. I have two boys, one on a farm; the other, I do not know where he is, and thought I might hear through your little paper. I enjoy all good reading, and with what I have try to help others. Mrs. H. G. Hudson, 524 East 4th Street, Olympia, Washington.

21. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends*,—Three years ago I made request for books and papers, and I wish to thank those friends who sent me some good books for boys and some good magazines. But it has been a long time since I received anything except the dear little *Cheerful Letter*, which some kind friend sends regularly. I now ask for current numbers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, especially the November number, or I would appreciate any woman's magazine and histories of any country; also books and pictures for my little boy who is very fond of pictures. Sue Harper Turbyfill, Linden, Oklahoma Territory.

22. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends*,—I desire to thank all who have sent me literature during the year. Many dull, lonely hours have been brightened thereby; and, as it passes from one to another carrying help and cheer, imagination is lost in wonder at the endless circles of influence. I hope still to receive the *Munsey's Magazine*, *Woman's Home Companion*, and a share of the books and papers sent out. Miss A. A. Peatross, Jute, North Carolina.

REQUEST.

Miss M. E. French, 624 Prairie Avenue, Kenosha, Wisconsin, would be glad to *borrow* Dr. A. P. Putnam's "Singers and Songs of the Liberal Faith." She is writing a paper on hymns, and needs this book, which is out of print.

Word is received of the death of Mrs. Joseph Shaw of Moss River, Compton, Canada. She had been a helpless sufferer for over two years. *The Cheerful Letter* from first to last was a great comfort, especially during helplessness.

 THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

LOVE FOR PARENTS.

Helen was making a pretty dress for Margery.

"It is such a pleasure to work for one's children," she remarked, "that I might easily forget to teach mine to do for me if I had not seen too many illustrations of filial ingratitude. How often it happens that parents who have slaved for their children are absolutely disregarded and neglected when old, or are expected to keep on slaving till they die! The remedy for this condition is, in my opinion, in the line of prevention, and consists in bringing up the children, even from babyhood, to do for their parents, and to expect to do more when older. I have talked with mine about this. I have told them that some day I shall not be able to work for them, that a time may come when I shall not be able to walk or to see well, and I asked them, 'Who will take care of me then?' Both children threw their arms about me, saying, 'I will.' I told them that I often get tired now, working in one way or another, and that they could help me by saving my steps or by loving me; that perhaps if they helped me I should not grow old quite so soon. Since then I notice that they look out for me in many ways, and their love does certainly help me through trying hours. If I lie down with a headache, they come in softly, kiss me or darken the room; and I often leave some small duties unperformed that they may acquire the habit of sparing me unnecessary labor.

"I am also anxious that the children should realize the relationship between themselves. For this reason I never compare one child with the other, and I make light of any grievance between them. 'It is easy to for-

give our own,' I say to the hurt or grieved child. And a gentle word to the offender generally makes him ashamed of his conduct. If I punished him, the angry feelings on both sides would be aggravated.

"Now don't imagine that because of these preparations I can feel sure of a loved and comfortable old age myself, or of a state of loving sympathy between Margery and Frank in mature years. I do not know what evil influences may touch and modify my children's characters in later life; but these first years of theirs I hold, and with God's help I am going to make the best of them. Don't you think it stands to reason that, if children are trained from their earliest recollections to be considerate of the other members of the family, they will be more likely to be so through life?"

"Indeed it does, Helen," said I. "But you are unfortunate in not having a grandparent near by for your little ones to visit and care for."

"Yes, I often realize that. Just think! Father and mother died before either of the children was born. I feel as if Margery and Frank had missed a blessing in not having been looked upon by them. Then Edward's parents are so far away that they are scarcely more than a name to the children. My little ones miss what ought to be one of the most elevating and refining influences of a child's life."

Just here I felt impelled to call my sister's attention to a condition which I had noticed in her home, and which seemed to me the weak part of the character-structure she was building. It required all my courage to put a question which was sure to wound, however faithfully intended.

"Are you teaching the children to do for their father as well as for you?"

During several moments there was no reply. I could not lift my eyes from the work in my hands. When Helen spoke, I perceived by her voice that she was deeply moved.

"God forgive me!" she said.

"Helen," I cried, startled myself at her emotion, "it isn't too late."

"No, but I'm so ashamed! You see, Edward is at home so little when the children are awake, and takes so little notice of them then, that he cannot get a hold on their affections without help from me. On Sundays they disturb him; on other days he gives them a cent now and then, and occasionally comes up and kisses them good-

night. When Margery was born, I used to think of training her to get papa's slippers and of doing other little things for him. But those intentions have been completely forgotten." . . .

There was no half-way work about Helen. Margery was helped to make a simple pudding "for dear papa" that very afternoon, and to Frank it was suggested that the same parent might like to see one of his funny pictures.—*From "As the Twig is Bent," by Susan Cheney.*

[Is the method of handling quarrels adopted by this mother the best? While it might do no harm, where somewhat gentle, conscientious children are concerned, would it be safe with those who have strong wills and domineering tempers? Suppose a child does something selfish and rude to another, and the mother tells the aggrieved one to overlook the offence, will not the offender be less likely to resist the temptation to domineer the next time he finds occasion, especially if the mother is out of the room? There are many boys of eight or ten who, as Jacob Abbott reminds us, are "all passion, appetite, and will." The reason and conscience are in embryo. Is not perfect justice the foundation of everything? Can its inculcation at the earliest period of life be too carefully and thoroughly followed up? L. F. C.]

BIOGRAPHY.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY (*continued*).

Lord Ashley's Christianity was essentially practical, and entered into every relation of life. With the memory of his early days always vividly before him, and their effects exhibiting themselves in his mental and bodily state, there is great beauty in the spirit of forgiveness breathed in every part of the following entry:—

"July 27.—. . . I have discharged two-thirds of my debt, and have wherewithal to discharge the other, which shall instantly be done. God be praised for this bounty! I shall extend my charities. I wish I could find some really deserving object. It is pleasant at last to be on good terms with Lord S.; and Charlotte is so, too. We forgive him all his unkindness. Memory is good to show a progress in virtue, not to furnish themes of indignation."

"August 6.—Dined with the directors of

the East India Company, and shall on every occasion. It is good to cultivate friendliness and kind feeling among them. That silly brag, Lord Wallace, whom I have found out from many circumstances to be a blustering talker, would have me treat them like thieves and murderers. 'Keep them at a distance.' 'Do not let it be known that they have access to you.' Stuff! If a man be honest, I am proud of his acquaintance. His recommendations would lead me to treat them with vulgar insolence. I shall not do so. India: what can I do for your countless myriads? There are two things,—good government and Christianity. How shall I compass them? I have no influence as yet. If God would tip my tongue with fire, I might speak in a voice which would be heard even at the ends of the earth; but he knows best, and will ever raise up his champions to fight the battle of immortality."

"*September 24.*—Thinking and reading lately a good deal on India. I shall never be able to do that empire a service, but I shall, nevertheless, continue my endeavors. 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' but the difficulty is to be righteous. In solitude very often of late I somehow begin to feel how truly God pronounced 'It is not good for man to be alone.'"

The bill to amend the Law for the Regulation of Lunatic Asylums had been passed on the 15th of July, and Lord Ashley watched its first operations with keen attention. The entry in the Diary continues:—

"From eleven o'clock till half-past six engaged in the good but wearisome cause of lunatic asylums. Took Sunday, for it is the day on which the keepers of old sought their own amusements and left the unhappy lunatics to pain and filthiness. Did not wish for such an employment, but duty made it imperative. Walked after dinner to Kensington and studied a little astronomy. Saw the planet Saturn and his ring. It is a spectacle worthy of God alone. Man has not beauty of soul sufficient to comprehend such majestic loveliness. I thanked God that I had enjoyed so great a blessing. It came as a reward for obedience to my painful duty."

There are many passages in the Diary at this period that show clearly how earnest

was the desire of Lord Ashley to devote himself exclusively to scientific pursuits. For a month he had been spending all his leisure in the study of astronomy, and it was with no little regret he came to the conclusion that henceforth he must continue it only as an occasional recreation. "Every one chooses his career," he wrote, "and it is well if he chooses that which is best suited to his talents. I have taken political life because I have, by God's blessing, many advantages of birth and situation which, although of trifling value if unsupported, are yet very powerful aids if joined to zeal and honesty. It is here, therefore, that I have the chief way of being useful to my generation."

"*London, November 13.*—... Yesterday, at our Lunatic Commission. There is nothing poetical in this duty, but every sigh prevented and every pang subdued is a song of harmony to the heart. Dined with East India Company at Albion Tavern. I felt happy. Certainly I begin to think that I am popular with all classes,—not vulgarly popular, but esteemed. This is by God's blessing. I am astonished at the wide dissimilarity of persons with whom I stand as a favorite,—persons who, if they were themselves brought together, would feel mutual dislike and aversion. The speaker last night said to me the kindest things. All sides of politics—Radicals, Whigs, high Tory, and neutrals—give me praise. Thank God I truckle for none. I hold a straight course, and Providence blesses me above my deserts."

The next two pages of the Diary contain remarks on the conduct of Lord Ashley's father and mother. It is clear that Lord Ashley and his brothers and sisters experienced unkindness, almost amounting to cruelty when they were young, from both parents, but especially from the mother; and now that they were grown up, although, as we have recently seen, in the spirit of Christian charity they had forgiven the wrong done them, there was evident aversion and a total absence of all those affectionate and confidential relations which are the great happiness of life, and are most to be looked for between parents and their children. The passage concludes with these words: "The history of our father and mother would be incredible to most men and per-

haps it would do no good if such facts were recorded."

"February 5.—Parliament begins to-day, and with it comes the beginning of sorrows. This evening I must speak. The duke, to my great joy, has resolved upon considering the expediency of removing all Catholic disabilities, and substituting in their stead other defences for Church and State. I have long and deeply desired this policy. Who but he would have dared to conceive and execute it,—persuade the king and overcome popular abhorrence? Peel has resolved to aid him. This is public virtue. I offered to say a few words expressive of my hearty concurrence. Peel was delighted. I did not know that my opinion was of such value; and now, O God, without whom there fall-eth not a sparrow to the ground, neither can there pass from the mouth one word of wisdom, give me thy aid, save me from failure and disgrace. *Half-past ten.*—I have spoken: I am but just saved from disgrace. I love the duke and will serve the government, and the best way of serving him is to say that my office shall be resigned whenever he shall have found another man more able to aid him in this and other departments.

"February 7.—Arbuthnot would not take my offer to the duke. How odd! Went on a visitation of madhouses. I can do good in that way if in no other."

Throughout the Diary at this time there are frequent passages to show that Lord Ashley, busy as he was, and happy as he was in his political associations, was still restless and ill at ease. His heart was yearning for a resting-place in wedded love, in a settled home, and in the joys of domestic life. His soul was seeking for more definite and systematic labor in distinctly religious spheres. His mind was craving for some absorbing interest which should wean him from his "desperate fits of lounging." Again and again he indulges in morbid self-analysis,—grieved that everybody should be able, as he supposes, to do everything better than himself, dreading the chance of failure and consequent disgrace, and constantly passing, as he says, "from the wildest of spirits to cruel and overwhelming despondency."

Important as were the events in the times of which we have written, one event has now to be recorded of infinitely greater

importance, relating to Lord Ashley's private life. "If I could find the creature I have invented," he wrote while at Aberystwith, "I should love her with a tenderness and truth unprecedented in the history of wedlock. I pray for her abundantly. God grant me this purest of blessings!" That prayer had been answered; his ideal had been found; and on the 10th of June, 1830, he was married to Emily, daughter of the fifth Earl Cowper,—he who at the beginning of the present century erected the mansion at Panshanger in Hertfordshire. For forty years she shared her husband's struggles, inspired his greater efforts, and was, as he himself has described her, "a wife as good, as true, and as deeply beloved as God ever gave to man."

Referring to this period of Lord Ashley's life, Lord Granville, who from boyhood had known him, says:—

"He was then a singularly good-looking man, with absolutely nothing of effeminate beauty. He had those manly good looks and that striking presence which, I believe, —though, of course, inferior by hundreds of degrees to the graces of mind and of character,—help a man more than we sometimes think; and they helped him when he endeavored to inspire his humble fellow-countrymen with his noble and elevated nature. Those good looks he retained to the end of his life. At the time I am speaking of he was seeking to marry that bright and beautiful woman who afterward threw so much sunshine on his home. I remember, as if it were yesterday, how a school-fellow of mine, not knowing that he was to be the future brother-in-law of Lord Shaftesbury, told me several anecdotes of the singular characteristic energy, earnestness, and tenderness which Lord Shaftesbury exhibited in all the actions of his life."

(To be continued.)

NATURAL HISTORY.

FRIENDLY SPIDERS.

In the *American Naturalist* of June, 1874, I find a pleasant description of two pet spiders, kept in a large cigar box covered with a pane of glass. For a day or two after the introduction of a second one the two were exceedingly shy of each other; but after

a week their fear wore away, and they were peaceful companions enough. But this amicable arrangement promised to end suddenly, as I thought, at one time; for, while I was watching them, they ran toward each other. As they met, rising on their hind legs, with the fore legs of each resting on the other's head and body, with jaws widely distended, they appeared as if about to engage in regular battle; but in a moment they dropped to their feet again and ran away from each other like two kittens at play. This I saw them do many times afterward, always ending in the same manner. I also often saw them chase each other around the box, first one and then the other being the pursuer. I thought then, and still think, they were at play; for never in any instance did they bite one another, nor manifest an appearance of wanting to do so.

The only time I ever saw them exhibit ill-temper was when I gave them water to drink, which I did once a day, pouring a small quantity upon the bottom of the box. The spiders always ran quickly to it, drinking long and steadily, and sometimes in their eagerness crowding each other: then one would seem to lose his temper and would drive the other away from the water.

Another and very neat way I had of supplying them with water was with a piece of whalebone split fine at the end to form a sort of brush: this would hold a drop or two. I held it near to one of the spiders, but high enough to oblige it to rise on its hind legs, almost erect, to reach it. This either would do as readily as a dog would have risen to my hand for a piece of meat, after the first two or three times that I supplied them in this way, sustaining themselves by resting the fore legs on the whalebone, sucking the brush dry before letting go of it.

After a time I did not need to bring the whalebone near to them. I would merely show it inside the box and there was a run for it, the one first reaching it getting the first drink, the other awaiting its turn. It was a matter of surprise to me that they cared to drink so often and so much.

C. H. C.

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To A. F. C.

BOSTON, May 27, 1833.

So little A. has again put on his seven-league boots and taken a stride five hundred

miles further from his loving friends in the Eastern world, and he does it with as much gravity and decision as if the effort cost him nothing. Do you know, we had to take the map and look carefully up and down the western tract of country to find this Prairie des Chiens, and are still much in doubt whether you live in a forest, fort, town, or log-house settlement? Upon these particulars do condescend to enlighten us, Sir Wanderer, and deign at the same time to give us a description of the manners, customs, and inhabitants,—whether they be Indians, whites, or dogs.

June 16.—I did not think I should leave this letter so long unfinished, but the longer I live the more I am in want of *time*. I think there must be some radical defect in my system of action that I never am ready for anything that happens, and always have to defer everything that I wish to do till the interest has all evaporated. I mean now not to take breath till I have done everything that I have begun, and then do all I now intend to do, and not begin anything else or think of anything else until I am in that happy vacant state when I have nothing before me to do.

I think I must send you some pictures (by James), that I may let you see that I am not entirely idle in that respect. Since you left us, I have painted several pictures. About two months ago I finished my first original picture, which was a blind boy reading with his fingers from a book with raised letters, like those they actually employ in the asylum in this town.

Our household at present consists of the Miss Peabodys, Mr. Mann, Mr. R., Mr. and Mrs. F., Horace C., Joseph Dwight, and Mary D. The latter is a young lady who keeps a drawing-school, and is a friendly rival of myself,—a very sensible girl, and I think will be a much better teacher than I have been. Her brother has just arrived, so I have not yet penetrated his character. Mr. F. is a South American nabob, about forty-five years old, who has married a little girl of nineteen. He is going back next winter, and proposes to have Samuel accompany him as his clerk. He will pay him a salary till he can get into business there. He says it is a fine climate for rheumatism; and I suppose it is, since it is about under the equator that he resides. Sam has luckily

been learning Spanish this last winter, so that he is provided in that respect.

Horace C. is a youth something in character between you and William. He is seventeen years old. He has a great deal of *constructiveness*, and is building a telegraph on the top of our house, by which he means to communicate with his brother at Cambridge. We expect General Jackson here in a few days, and Horace intends to announce his arrival by telegraph. I wish you knew the Peabodys.* They are the first boarders we have ever had who seemed perfectly at home, and with whom we do not feel that they require all as a right, and consider courtesy as nothing. They are delightful people, and, if they had as much money as good will we should need no other boarders. Mr. Sparks, you know, is married and lives at Cambridge. He has a beautiful and accomplished wife.

Henry McL. has just returned from Europe, and, as soon as he has digested the observations he has made during his travels, he will begin to preach. He is quite entertaining, has seen all, and is ready to talk about all that he has seen. He dwells rather too much upon a topic yet, however.

I will not render this letter quite illegible by writing across it, but must just mention that we expect Samuel in a few days. Grand-papa, etc., are all quite well. I wish you could see Thomas; but, if you remember James as a boy, he is much like him,—very beautiful still, and as bright as the whole race of Clarkes put together. He is forever relating anecdotes of cats and dogs,—cats are his favorites among animals, and old Tinker his special playmate. He does rather less mischief than formerly. This spring we took him into town, and sent him to school a fortnight; but he learnt so much more from Ned O. than from the school-mistress that we were fain to send him back to the innocent atmosphere of Newton.

Adieu, my dear brother.

To A. F. C.

Boston, July 10, 1833.

My Dear Brother,—I heard James's first sermon in public last Sunday evening, and yet not in public, but in the chapel of Divinity Hall, in the presence of the students, the

* Miss Elizabeth Peabody and her sisters, afterward Mrs. Mann and Mrs. Hawthorne.

dean, and a few of the inhabitants of Cambridge. My expectations and even my hopes were far surpassed in the perfect success of his performance. It was complete, a beautiful whole; no rawness, no painful inadequacy, but an honest animation and earnestness, tempered with the most becoming and beautiful modesty,—very manly and yet very modest. Nothing, I assure you, ever went so to my heart,—not even Mr. Greenwood's arrows of truth.

He did not choose one of those vast and complex topics with which ignorance delights to grapple, but one which he had always seen through, and which his own experience had confirmed to him. The text was, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come," etc. It was treated with that simplicity which is the triumph of art, showing first how joyous is the season of childhood and youth; secondly, how certainly and surely such joy passes away, which is only given us, to begin with, before we have earned any of the deep, eternal joy, which comes from the exercises of the spirit; thirdly, how education may assist in replacing the one sort of happiness by the other, without pain and strife; and, fourthly, how those who have lost the joy of youth, without finding the joy of age, had better seek it as quickly as possible.

The delivery of this discourse was particularly fine. James has a most expressive manner,—a fine voice which requires only exercise to make it perfect; an intonation and modulation which show that the human voice was intended as a powerful instrument in assisting the expression of truth; and, above all, an earnestness and solemnity of manner that make you feel willing to yield entirely to his influence. His prayers are without exception the most like what prayers should be of anything I ever heard. They make you feel as if in the presence of God, the spirit uttering itself to its Creator.

I cannot, after all, convey it to you, so there is not much use in trying. I hope you will hear him yourself before many months. I hope everything from James now, and until now I have scarcely dared to hope. Much as I have known James contained before,—and I have found him out a great deal within the last year,—I was astonished and surprised that I at last heard him succeed in expressing a portion of his mind. I am sure now that he has not made a mistake in the choice of his profession, and that he will have influence, and a good influence. The

best of it is that all this is well earned by honest and faithful endeavor. The earnest pursuit of truth has been his occupation during the last years of his life. Three or four years I am certain have been marked by his single-minded devotion to truth, and it is fit and right that he should have found some traces of her presence. "Seek, and ye shall find," "Ask, and ye shall receive," are the words of truth; and this among others is a proof that, whoever seeks with sincerity and asks with just desires and intentions, shall receive and find.

I write this to you, A., because you may not hear James preach, and I wish you to have the pleasure of knowing what he is now, as far as it is possible for you to know him without seeing him.

If possible, I hope you will all meet at St. Louis, and I know my three brothers will gain strength from each other. If Sam could join you, and then if we could all meet at Newton, the joy would perhaps be too intense.

Grandfather is well, and the rest at Newton. The President has returned to Washington quite sick. Mr. Van Buren's pleasure in his journey was quite destroyed by his anxiety for the President's health.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

I.

The first letter of the words in the answer read downward in the order given will give the name of a celebrated navigator of the fifteenth century.

My first is a city on the southern coast of Spain.

My second is a city in New England.

My third is a city which once ruled the world.

My fourth is an island in the north.

My fifth is a country in South-western Europe.

My sixth is a State in the Union.

My seventh is a great river in North America.

My eighth is a beautiful city in Europe.

My ninth is a river in New York.

My tenth is one of the Great Lakes.

My eleventh is a river of France.

My twelfth is an island of the West Indies.

My thirteenth is a river in Siberia.

My fourteenth is a city in England.

My fifteenth is a range of mountains which forms a boundary between two countries.

My sixteenth is one of the New England States.

My seventeenth is a city in Switzerland.

My eighteenth is a country in South America.

My nineteenth is a desert in Africa.

II.

False Comparatives.

Example: positive, a fillet; comparative, a wax candle. Answer: tape, taper.

1. Positive, the name of a fairy; comparative, a door-keeper.

2. Positive, the government of Turkey; comparative, to wrinkle.

3. Positive, to mail; comparative, a large advertisement.

4. Positive, to tremble with fear; comparative, a member of a religious sect.

5. Positive, what is gone; comparative, a clergyman.

6. Positive, boiled tar; comparative, a vessel carrying water.

7. Positive, a manner of cooking eggs; comparative, one who steals game.

(Church Standard.)

III.

There are eighteen words pronounced in saying "United States." All of these words have different meanings, though some are pronounced alike. For instance, unite, knight, night, etc. What are the fifteen others?

IV.

Pi.

Raif dan geren si het sharm ni nuje;

Dwie dan wram si eht suynn nono;

Het wireflong shures grifen het loop

Whit drenels swodsha, mid dan loco.

Romf eht wol shebus "bbo twiwe" slalc,

Toni shi snet a lorefase slaf,

Het glubflea defas, dan ghrouth het hate

Raf fof the sae's fanit slupse tabe.

Answers to Puzzles in December Number.

I. Washington.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| II. 1. Paramatta. | 13. Figs. |
| 2. Sandal-wood. | 14. Grapes. |
| 3. China. | 15. Sardines. |
| 4. Society. | 16. Wick. |
| 5. Three Sisters. | 17. Ben Nevis. |
| 6. Florence. | 18. Sea of Ockhotsk |
| 7. Augusta. | 19. Brussels. |
| 8. Aurora. | 20. Cologne. |
| 9. Paris. | 21. Newcastle. |
| 10. Berlin. | 22. Sheffield. |
| 11. Alps. | 23. Birmingham. |
| 12. Wheat. | |

- III. 1. B-oar; bo-a-r.
 2. F-ire; fir-e.
 3. Y-our; you-r.
 4. M-ark; Mar-k.
 5. D-one; don-e.

IV. "A new broom sweeps clean."

REPORT OF MONTHLY MEETING.

The regular monthly meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange was held at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, on Friday, December 4, with Miss Clarke in the chair. Twenty-five were present.

The reports of the secretary and treasurer were read and approved. Miss Brown stated that there were now thirteen names on the waiting list for travelling libraries, and that six names had been assigned during the month.

A report was given by the committee appointed to formulate a plan for obtaining a report in figures of all the work done during the year. Postals explaining the matter and asking for their co-operation will be sent to the chairman of all Cheerful Letter committees and to those doing individual work. In April a list of printed questions will be sent, the replies to which will enable the committee to make a more satisfactory statement than ever before of the amount of work accomplished.

Representatives were present from sixteen branches, and several reported by letter. The reports mentioned many travelling libraries, also boxes and barrels of reading that had gone to various places for distribution, in addition to letters and reading sent to regular correspondents.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11.50.

Bertha Langmaid,
Secretary.

A TRUE STORY OF A STORK.

A writer in *Our Animal Friends* relates a curious incident about a stork which made its nest upon the roof of a house in Northern Germany, and, having been petted by the children, became very tame and companionable.

At the first signs of approaching cold weather the stork prepared to flit to warmer climes. The children were sad at the thought of losing their pet, but their parents

consoled them with the assurance that the bird would surely return the next spring. The children, still uneasy at the idea of the stork not being cared for during the long winter, consulted together, and evolved a brilliant idea, which they immediately proceeded to put into execution. They wrote a little note in their best German script, stating that the stork was very dear to them, and begging the good people in whose country it might spend the winter to be kind to their pet and send it back to them in the spring.

They sealed the note, fastened it to a ribbon, tied it round the bird's neck, and tucked it under its wing. The next day they sadly watched the stork wing its way toward milder skies. The snow and ice came. Christmas-time brought the children gifts and fresh amusements, but their summer pet was not forgotten. When the spring came round again, their little feet used to climb to the roof day by day, looking and longing for the stork's return; and behold! one fine morning there it was, tame and gentle as ever.

Great was the children's delight; but what was their surprise to discover round its neck and under its wing another bright band, with a note attached, addressed to "the children who wrote the letter the stork brought." The ribbon was quickly untied and the missive opened. It was from a missionary in Africa, stating that he had read the children's note and had cared for the stork, and thought that young people whose good hearts had prompted them to provide for the comfort of a bird through the winter would be willing to help clothe and feed the destitute boys and girls of his mission. A full name and address followed. The German children were full of sympathy, and the missionary's note won a golden answer from the family. Other letters came and went by post between them until by and by the children learned to know the missionary and his little black waifs almost as well as they knew the beloved stork that had proved so trusty a messenger.

The only way to regenerate the world is to do the duty which lies nearest us, and not to hunt after grand, far-fetched ones for ourselves. If each drop of rain chose where it should fall, God's showers would not fall as they do now.—*Charles Kingsley.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,—good citizens of the country,—for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, Box 91, South Framingham, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Moderation is a little stream which flows softly, but freshens everything along its course.—*Madame Swetchine.*

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

The committee call the attention of all readers of the *Cheerful Letter* and members of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to the change in our Direction printed this month. Those who desire to join the Cheerful Letter Exchange and to have correspondents assigned to them are requested to write to our assistant secretary, Miss Frances B. Fisher, 491 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., instead of to Miss Langmaid as before. Miss Langmaid will retain a portion of the work; but, in order to meet the increasing requirements of the secretary's duties, it is necessary to have the aid of a second secretary.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose three letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY,—Miss Frances B. Fisher, 491 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Requests for correspondents should be sent to Miss Fisher.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Mrs. Charles T. Catlin, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks should be made payable to Mary Louise Catlin.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Mrs. Catlin at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Mrs. Catlin, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.